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## **California Youth Authority Defines New Model**

**For Immediate Release**

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SACRAMENTO-The California Youth Authority (CYA) submitted in state court on May 16, 2005, a new program model that will fundamentally change the way the state's juvenile correctional facilities operate.

At the same time, state leaders announced a proposal to invest \$3.1 million over the next year to plan for the development of new facilities as well as new staff classifications.

"Public safety is the 'barometer' for any correctional program model. With over 70% of juvenile offenders released from CYA rearrested within three years, the state needs to dramatically improve how it deals with those offenders," said Youth and Adult Correctional Agency Secretary Roderick Q. Hickman.

"The program design that we are submitting in court today focuses on preparing youth to reenter society from the day they arrive at our door. Not only will this bring us into compliance with the law; it's smart public safety policy," Hickman said. "It's our job to make sure that victims and their communities are confident that these offenders are successfully prepared to reenter society."

State law in the Welfare and Institution Code requires the CYA "to protect society from the consequences of criminal activity" and to do so through the "correction and rehabilitation of young persons who have committed public offenses."

"Unfortunately, CYA has been neglected for many years," said CYA Director Walter Allen III. "As a result, we have not been able to do our job adequately."

Under a state taxpayer's lawsuit, known as *Farrell v. Allen*, the state was required to submit in court today a programmatic description of the new rehabilitation model. CYA has until November to develop the implementation plans, but the document submitted today lays out the new direction.

This new CYA model is based on the balanced justice approach, emphasizing community protection; offender accountability to the victims and the community; and improving offender competency. This new approach is firmly rooted in research-based concepts and practices, with some components borrowed from effective programs in other states, including Colorado, Washington, Missouri, Texas, and Florida.

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At the foundation of the new model is a culture change for CYA that will establish a treatment environment using positive peer culture and positive social rules and expectations. By reducing living unit size and increasing the staff to youth ratio, CYA staff will be able to continually interact with youth in ways that promote responsibility, positive reinforcement, conflict resolution and behavior change, Hickman noted.

The new model outlined in the court filing will include: smaller living units (most units will get down to 35 or 40 youth by the end of the next fiscal year); increased staff to youth ratios (1:7 for open dorms and 1:8 for single room housing units); comprehensive and consistent assessments to ensure youth are properly placed in appropriate facilities and programs; an individualized behavioral contract/program plan called an ICAP (Individual Change and Accountability Plan). The success of the new model will be ensured by improved staff training and accountability.

"This model emphasizes teaching young offenders respect and to take responsibility for the harm they have caused. It will significantly improve the working environment for staff and better prepare the youth to reenter society," said CYA Director Allen.

Also today, the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency announced its proposal to spend \$3.1 million over the next year to continue efforts to take this reform further.

"We believe the program model we submitted in court today can be implemented at CYA to create a safer environment for staff and better prepare youth to reenter society, but this represents the minimum of what we need in order to bring us into compliance with the law," Hickman said.

To view the plans online, please go to: [www.cya.ca.gov/about/ploreports.htm](http://www.cya.ca.gov/about/ploreports.htm).

The CYA provides institutional training and parole supervision for juvenile and young adult offenders. The department also works with community organizations, local law enforcement and other agencies on gang and drug suppression and delinquency prevention activities. The department is responsible for 7,088 juvenile and young adult offenders, with 3,288 in eight institutions and two conservation camps, and 3,800 on parole. In addition, more than 27,000 crime victims are on record to receive services from the department.